

**CASE 2: 16-0250LC – Sunrise Academy – 5657 Scioto Darby Road**

**PARCEL NUMBER:** 050-003005

**APPLICANT:** Islamic Society of Greater Columbus c/o Mark Denny, CDI Design Group, 1675 Gateway Circle, Grove City, Ohio 43123.

**REQUEST:** Review & approval of a conditional use under the provisions Code Chapter 1123 to permit a 2,678-square-foot building addition and accommodate five parking spaces.

Mr. Talentino presented the staff report with power point slides of the site.

The site is 3.873 acres located at the southeast corner of Scioto Darby Road and Veterans Memorial Drive. The site consists of a private elementary school and includes three buildings totaling approximately 24,052 square feet. On May 29, 2001, the Board of Zoning Appeals denied a variance request to reduce the minimum building setback from 60 feet to 25 feet from Scioto Darby Road for a 19,200-square-foot building addition. On September 20, 2001, the Board of Zoning Appeals denied a variance request to eliminate the requirement to install public sidewalk along Scioto Darby Road. On August 17, 2006, the Board of Zoning Appeals approved a variance to reduce the minimum number of caliper inches for replacement trees.

The applicant is requesting approval of a conditional use to permit a 2,678-square-foot addition to an existing school building and a vehicular use area expansion to accommodate five parking spaces.

The Commission is to review the proposal for conformance to the provisions of Hilliard Code Chapter 1123. The Commission is to review the proposed use and its potential impact on its surroundings.

Staff finds that a traffic impact study has not been submitted as required. Staff finds that the site is currently experiencing daily challenges related to picking up of students which causes significant negative impacts on the through movement of vehicles on Veterans Memorial Drive and Scioto Darby Road. Staff finds that expanding the existing use will cause undue traffic congestion or hazards adjacent to the site along Veterans Memorial Drive and Scioto Darby Road. Based on these findings, consistent with the provisions of Hilliard Code Chapter 1123, staff cannot recommend approval of the proposed conditional use. Staff recommends that a traffic impact study and revised plans addressing the staff recommendations listed in the staff report be provided for review by staff and the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Chairman Lewie asked if there were questions for staff.

Mayor Schonhardt asked as the building is being bumped out, will additional impervious surface be added to the site? Are the parking spots that are shown in the plan there today?

Mr. Talentino replied it doesn't look like it because it's more of a paved extended walk in front of the building. Those parking spots are there today.

Mayor Schonhardt asked is the building coming out over the paved walkway?

Mr. Talentino replied yes, that's one of the things that we want on the plans because if it's a significant issue then we'll have to address storm water management.

Mayor Schonhardt stated that's my concern because this site isn't huge and I know a lot of impervious surface was added there with many of the adjacent property owners backing up to this site. I want to make certain that if storm water becomes an issue or is an issue that it's addressed now and not after the fact. For the record, I'm advising the applicant that as they look at traffic that they make certain that they have someone evaluate the storm water management.

Mr. Talentino replied to that point, they'll probably lose a couple of existing spaces and the idea will be to shave down some of the landscape islands to make turning easier for buses and extend the drive. We'll have to work with them on the design of the five proposed parking spaces because they might need a couple more or less depending on how this all comes out. There will be some additional impervious coverage that they'll have to deal with.

Chairman Lewie asked what's the percentage of building structure to the lot?

Mr. Talentino replied the percentage coverage by buildings with the proposed addition is 16 percent.

Chairman Lewie asked was there a landscaping or screening plan proposed?

Mr. Talentino replied no, but that's one of the items that we recommend to demonstrate conformance with the landscape plan with the overall expansion.

Chairman Lewie asked will they be in violation of the front setback?

Mr. Talentino replied no, because they meet the building setback requirements. With the right-of-way that we're going to acquire for the round-a-bout, it makes the existing parking spaces closest to Scioto Darby Road non-conforming. The applicant is interested in submitting a variance application to make those compliant.

Chairman Lewie asked if the applicant would like to speak.

**Mark Denny, CDI Design Group, was present** and stated with me is Dr. Tarazi who can answer questions for the school. As Mr. Talentino stated we're not done with the entire process yet but we hope to be. We wanted to find out how feasible this particular addition is. The school is in the process of getting a traffic study completed and will work with staff to mitigate the problems and figure out what's best. We haven't done a current parking count and the Code has changed from the original count. Once the round-a-bout takes place it makes some of the existing parking non-conforming. We'll go back and reanalyze that so that it meets the current Code. In addition to that they do lease some spaces across the street and in our next submittal we'll put that lease in as one of our exhibits. We showed five additional future parking spaces on the plans and the reason we consider them future is because that's where our mature trees are. Before we would destroy those or take them out, we want to see if we can deal with the parking in a better way. It's my understanding that the school has been in the process of reducing enrollment for the future by targeting 24 students instead 30 students per classroom. That may help some of the traffic congestion and parking that they have. There will be the same number of classrooms as they have today with the addition. Two classrooms within the existing building were modified so that they could get a hallway for the new addition and take up part of the lobby that is no longer being used.

The additional space for the administrative control point of the school has windows so that staff can look out and have control of parking and traffic issues. The front door has been moved slightly to the west and where the now existing entrance is will become the library area with full glass across the wall. There's space for a science lab, computer lab, and storage. The amount of students in the classroom would actually be the same but they would add design systems to the school which they don't have currently. It's our intention to put a rooftop unit and screen it so those things can be hidden and still get fresh air to the students. We want the architecture to be very similar to what's there in terms of materials, color, and shape.

Chairman Lewie stated my concern is the lot being built out and a round-a-bout going in with more traffic. I've been caught in a traffic jam there last summer and it's serious. I wouldn't want any students crossing the street and getting hurt. This lot has two new buildings on it for the school and will have an additional square footage of 2,400 feet and five more parking spots. We are putting a lot in there and it's going to be tight. With the traffic study and the traffic impact, parking, landscaping, and setbacks, do you think that they've outgrown the facility and perhaps another location would be better?

Mr. Denny replied with my understanding they are ok now and they are reducing population and adding areas that they need from an educational standpoint and not for additional students. They have realized the site is maxed out. I want to address the storm water and there's a retention basin southeast where the lawn area is and we will make sure that it's adequate to meet the needs.

Mr. Muether asked what is the current population of students now and what do you intend it to be in the future? What is your reduction plan?

**Dr. Mouhamed Tarazi, Sunrise Academy, was present** and replied as of today, we have about 375 students and our plan is to reduce this overtime. We've put a strict cap on every classroom and they've dropped. We also have a plan to build a Sunrise Academy East which would definitely help in reducing the number of students. If this happens then the number of students will drop another 150 to 200 students. Right now we are hosting 150 kids coming from the Eastside and if we can provide them a campus then that would definitely reduce the number of students. There's no way that we can add additional students to the existing facility. What we're proposing here isn't to increase the enrollment but to provide better education for these kids. Our computers are on carts and they go classroom to classroom. We don't have a library and every teacher has their own corner as a library. The plans show a library, computer lab, science lab, and some reconfiguration of the walls. There's no addition to any classrooms to add additional students because we can't do it and we're maxed.

Chairman Lewie asked would you increase the number of staff at this facility?

Dr. Tarazi replied no, the number of staff would be reduced. We're at capacity and can't add additional staff.

Mr. Robertson asked have you done a site circulation study or consideration? There appears to be a problem when students are being picked up.

Dr. Tarazi replied that's definitely an issue and we did think about having the parents park in the parking lot in the park and have a small bus take their kids and bring them back. We thought of these

issues but we haven't come to a final solution. We did lease the parking lot across the street and we renewed the lease yesterday until we get a better situation here. The morning isn't a problem because the buses come at different times but the issues come when it's time for dismissal. We'll be working with staff to provide some ways and try to make it better.

Chairman Lewie asked for public comments.

**Ms. Kay Ackers, 5637 Revere Drive, was present** and stated my property is directly behind Sunrise Academy. I want to say up front that I'm not against the kids and the school being there. I have over twenty years as an employee of Hilliard City Schools and a good portion of my life has been around children and schools. When I compare Hilliard City Schools and Sunrise Academy on space commitments they've made for their school sites, that space is too small for a school. It's like a stockade because it's zoned so close to a public road that in order for them to feel that they can protect their children they've put up this massive fencing. I don't think it's a good environment for kids. They can't play in that little tiny green space without all of their balls coming into my yard. The only green space that is left in that area is the catch basin for runoff water. I think it's throwing good money after bad to expand the facilities on that site in any manner. I love hearing the kids play and I don't want to lose hearing that since I'm retired but I think it's time for them to be someplace else. Should the standard be different because it's a private school? It should be at the same standard as if it were in Hilliard City Schools. We're an old neighborhood but we don't have to be treated differently and that facility wouldn't be allowed in a brand new neighborhood in Hilliard. I think it's time for our only Islamic school in Hilliard to be someplace else for the betterment of the facility for the children and not for the kind of school it is but because they've outgrown it.

Mayor Schonhardt asked would their proposal of reducing the enrollment of the school by roughly half of what it is today make a difference in your comments?

Ms. Ackers replied no, because I think the percentage of buildings on that site isn't conducive to a school site for children. This site is just not big enough to support what I consider an acceptable environment for a school for children.

**Mr. John Sutton, 5652 Revere Drive, was present** and stated there's no consideration for what we have to look at. When you showed the picture of the cars lined up, there was a no stopping sign. Why isn't that being enforced when they park their cars there? How can you count on parking across the street when you don't own that property? What if the owners of that parking lot sell it and say that you're not parking there? You can't use that as part of your argument for parking. Keep this place and get another facility if you want but this is just getting out of hand.

**Mr. Charles Smith, 5619 Revere Drive, was present** and stated I represent multiple properties which are along the back of the site. One is owned by my parents and the other is owned by me. Enough is enough. You knew what the site was like and the size restrictions when you bought it. I don't know how you get 16 percent building coverage with the addition included. By the time you factor in all the parking I would be very surprised if their coverage space is well exceeding 50 to 60 percent of that lot. With that being said, there's a nice sidewalk that goes between the outside of their fence and Scioto Darby Road for the public to use. If they're going to build an addition, I don't see where the sidewalk is in this proposal. The public is losing sidewalk access. I know the Commission likes the appearances of

the buildings but they have three different buildings with each having a different style siding. You don't see it that much from the front because of the privacy fence but when you're a resident and your backyard goes up to that property line, it's a real eyesore. It's even to the point that it's starting to reduce property values. People are selling their houses at a reduced price because of this eyesore that's behind them which in turn is affecting property taxes. I know there's a city ordinance that two styles of fence on a property isn't allowed. That property has three different styles of fencing on it. Why is that being allowed? Why isn't it the same for them as it is with the public resident? It should be one style of fence unless you get special permission. When they put that privacy fence in, they recessed it back at least 12 to 18 inches from the property line so that it's inside their property. There are residents that have existing fences and the space in between those two fences isn't maintained. It's their property but they don't maintain it. In the fall, unless the residents take money out of their pockets and do the weed treating, those weeds will grow an excess of 6 to 8 feet and are turning into sapling trees. Just because you put the fence back you still need to maintain your property. The space they have now isn't adequate for the kids that they have. It's with regularity that balls and toys are coming over that privacy fence and into the backyards of residents. That tells me that either they don't have adequate playing space outside for the kids and/or they don't have adequate supervision because I do know there's a resident on that property line that has dogs and those kids regularly stick their hand through the fence to get to them. If you're going to be expanding then you're reducing the space for the kids to play which is just exasperating that problem. They're parking on a street that says no parking and why isn't that enforced? Some of their parents go through Revere Drive at excess speeds and don't slow down to acknowledge that it's a residential street. There are kids who play on that street and they're endangering those kids. They said they're reducing enrollment and hoping to open up another campus but what happens if they don't do that.

**Ms. Michele Pershing, 5674 Revere Drive, was present** and stated my son and I own a house that shares a part of the fence line with the school. My concerns are the number of students and traffic because I don't think enrollment is going to decrease. I had a public notice that said an 8,452-square-foot addition but I'm glad it's less. **(Typo in the public notices that were mailed and placed in the info boxes)** I'm opposed to this going on because it creates a big problem for the neighborhood. We have this beautiful municipal park and this clog of traffic goes there every day. I feel it doesn't represent our park very well and detracts from the feeling of being welcomed. I'm also concerned about people that cross back and forth with their children as drivers try to navigate through this gauntlet of parked minivans waiting to pick up their children. I feel it's a safety issue for parents, students, and people trying to navigate through there. I want to know who governs how many kids are allowed to have there and is there a limit? Does Hilliard City Schools have a limit to how many children until maximum capacity? He can say if he gets this other facility or they're going to try and reduce enrollment but more and more of these folks are moving into our community and they're going to be continuing to enroll in the school. I don't see their enrollment going down at all unless they do build another facility but that's not an immediate fix to the situation before they add on to this particular building. I agree with the issues of the look of the buildings with the gymnasium basically a pole barn. I didn't own my property when that was built but it's such an eyesore and it's so big that it blocks the wind movement that comes through our properties. I don't know how they were allowed to build something that is architecturally unattractive. If you were one of the neighbors and looked out your back window you would understand the distress that we're feeling. It detracts from our neighborhood that was built in 1959 which has been here longer than that facility.

**Mr. Doug Pershing, 5674 Revere Drive, was present** and stated is there a proposal for a new round-a-bout at Scioto Darby and Veterans Memorial? Has that been approved and is it going to happen?

Mr. Seidle replied that's part of the Scioto Darby and Leppert improvements and it will happen.

Mr. Pershing stated my house is the last house that is at the corner and I see the line of cars every day right behind our property. Right across from this is another school exit and traffic is brutal. I don't know what their school schedule is but heaven forbid in the spring if that school is operating and their picking up children while the pool is open. It doesn't matter what business is there because that property is overgrown.

Chairman Lewie asked for any further comments.

Chairman Lewie stated I don't think we can go forth with the case tonight because there are insinuating circumstances regarding the traffic, parking, and architectural designs. I request that this case be postponed thirty or sixty days.

Mr. Denny replied we will postpone the case for sixty days which will be more favorable to working with staff on the traffic study and the other issues.

Ms. Nixon stated I work with a lot of traffic planners and there's something called average peaking factors. You need to inform them of not only your school's traffic issues but also the schools across the street.

Mr. Denny replied we're also hoping that the traffic study for the round-a-bout will be available so that we can take that into account and add it to the calculations.

Chairman Lewie asked for any further comments, hearing none he called for a motion.

**MOTION:** Mr. Movshin made a motion to postpone CASE 2: 16-0250LC – Sunrise Academy – 5657 Scioto Darby Road to the July 14, 2016 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

Ms. Nixon seconded the motion.

**VOTE:** Ms. Nixon, Yes; Mr. Muether, Yes; Mr. Movshin, Yes; Chairman Lewie, Yes; Mr. Robertson, Yes; Mayor Schonhardt, Yes.

**STATUS:** The motion passed 6-0 and CASE 2: 16-0250LC – Sunrise Academy – 5657 Scioto Darby Road was postponed to the July 14, 2016 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.